XVII

Moksa or Release.

The Upanisads hold that in the highest state of religious realisation, there is a disintegration of individuality, a giving up of selfish isolation, but it is not a mere nothing or death. "As the flowing rivers disappear in the sea, losing their name and form, thus a wise man, freed from name and form, goes to the divine person who is beyond all." (Mundaka III. 2.8; See also Prasna. VI. 5). The Upanisads do not recognise the ultimate reality of the narrow individual self. The real in finite life, what is best in the individual's nature, is the infinite, and that persists beyond the limits of physical existence. In the highest condition we attain our ideals perfectly, completely and absolutely. The Taittiriya Upanisad points out how the bliss we have in the world is only a shadow of the divine bliss, a feeble apology for it. The Upanisads dispute the conclusion that the goal of man is annihilation. The highest is a state of rapture and ecstasy, a condition of ānanda, where the creature as creature is abolished, but becomes one with the Creator, or more accurately realises his oneness with Him.

Baron Von Hugel speaks to us of three conditions which "appear to the experiencing soul, in proportion to their concentration as timeless. i.e. as non-successive, simultaneous, hence as eternal ---- The eternity of the soul is not here a conclusion drawon from the apparent God-likeness in other respects of the soul when in this condition, but the eternal, on the contrary is the very centre of the experience itself, and is the chief inducement to the soul for holding itself to be divine - The soul's immortality cannot be experienced in advance of death, whilst its eternity, in the sense indicated, is or seems to be directly experienced in such "this-life" states. Hence the belief in immortality is here derivative, that in eternity is primary. (Eternal Life. page. 27.) precisely

The Upanisads do not describe the fullness of the absolute reality and the precise condition of ultimate freedom. There are two conflicting accounts running throughout; that it is a likeness to God, and that it is a state of oneness with God.

There are passages which describe the oneness of the individual with the infinite. "The pranava is the bow, the Atman is the arrow, and the Brahman is said to be its mark. It should be hit by one who is self-collected, and

that which hits becomes like the arrow, one with the mark that is Brahman." (Mundaka III 2.2. See also Katha II 15.). "All these become one in the highest imperishable Brahma" (Mundaka. III. 2.7. Sarva ekibhavanti.) "He becomes merged in the supreme undecaying Brahman Atman" (Prasna IV. 9.). "The Atman becomes one with Brahman." (Sarvam Saravat tanmayo bhaveh.). "He becomes omniscient and becomes all". (Sa Sarvajñah Sarvo bhavati) "He enters into all". (Sarvam evāvi s'anti.) The redeemed soul enters into all things and becomes all things in spirit. "Having attained Him the seers content with their knowledge, their purpose accomplished, free from all desire, and with full composure, having attained the all-pervading Atman on all sides, ever concentrating their minds, enter into everything." (Mundaka. III 2.5.) They who see the whole universe held firm in the one all-~~pervading~~ unfolding presence cannot have any sorrow or torment. The liberated soul feels his oneness with God so intensely that he calls himself the creator of the world. "I am the food. I am the food-eater. I am the ~~Sub~~ Subject, I am the Object, I am the two together. I am the first born, the destroyer of the world also. I am the sunlike light. I am the centre of the world, of immortal gods." (Tait: III).

All these passages seem to imply that the highest state is the sleep without dreams, or the peace without understanding. When Yājñavalkya explains it to Maitreyi in the words: "As a lump of salt which is thrown into the water dissolves and cannot be gathered up again, but wherever water is drawn, it is salty, so truly is it with this great being, the endless, the unlimited, the fullness of knowledge, from these beings it came into view and with them it vanishes. There is no consciousness after death". Maitreyi observes: "This speech of thine, that there is no consciousness after death perplexes me". Yajnavalkya replies, "I tell thee nothing perplexing, it is quite comprehensible. Where there is a (apparently) duality of existences, one can see the other, one can smell the other, one can speak to the other, one can hear the other, one can think of the other, one can apprehend the other. But where everything has turned into his Ātman by whom and to whom shall he speak, by whom and whom shall he see, by whom and whom shall he smell, by whom and whom shall he hear, think and apprehend? By whom shall he apprehend him through whom he apprehends this universe? Through whom shall he apprehend him the apprehender? (~~Brihadaranyaka Upanishad~~). From this it is clear that in some way beyond our understanding, the soul attains liberation

devoid of any activity, perception, thought or consciousness, which are all symptomatic of a dialistic vision. These activities rest on the opposition of Subject and Object, and are possible only in the world of relativity. ... In the absolute world all plurality is said to disappear, and it is then the everlasting unchangeable Self in whose perfection all Movement is stilled, all colours pale and all sounds pass away. This is the negative side. - There is also the positive side - Because we being finite, are unable to describe the fullness of the absolute State, it does not follow that that State should become a negative blank. When the positive side is emphasized, the liberated soul is looked upon as a perfected individual with a status of absolute equality with the Supreme Soul. (Paramam Samyam upaiti:) "Traversing these worlds, having the food he likes, taking the form he likes, he sits singing songs." (Tait: III 10.8). This passage indicates that the freed soul has yet an active existence. According to the Chāndogya Upanisad, immortality is lifting oneself up to the region of the deity. (II.22.). Mundaka holds it to be the companionship with God. (III. 2.6). Absolute likeness with God is also suggested (III. 1.3). One thing is clear — that the highest condition is a state of activity, full

of freedom & perfection. It is said that the liberated soul becomes one with all and lives a life in unity with God. The positive description seems to suggest a sense of individuality, which is necessary for the fulfilment of the joy of the one supreme. But this does not prevent the soul from feeling that God is at work in the cosmic drama where the divine consciousness plays and acts. The liberated individual also plays in the same drama with full possession of the truth. There is nothing which does not tend to his purposes. "He maketh the winds His angels and the flaming fire His ministers." He who achieves perfection in this life is called a jīvan mukta. His joy of immortality realises itself in the freedom of movement.

The vagueness of the Upanisad doctrines led to the development of different theories from the same texts. Some Buddhists in keeping the Upanisad idea to be an entire loss, some Vēdantins as the self immersion of the individual soul in the supreme. Others hold that it is an eternal existence absorbed in the thought, love, and enjoyment of the supreme and not an annihilation. The religious philosophers of Vaisnavism and Saivism adopt this standpoint. But almost all Indian thinkers are agreed that

Moksa is release from birth and death. Union with God is another name for becoming eternal.

XVIII

Evil and Suffering

In the Vedic hymns, virtue is conformity with the Vedic precepts, and vice nonconformity. In the Upanisads knowledge of life eternal is virtue and ignorance vice. Error is the denial by the ego of the supremacy of the whole, or its own assertion of self-sufficiency. Evil is the denial in conduct by the ego of the supremacy of the whole. Sin is the product of the shallow insight, breeding selfish egoism that hugs its own narrowness and shrinks from all sacrifice. The Upanisads do not say that evil is illusion or that evil is permanent. It is unreal in the sense that it is bound to be transmuted into good. It is real to the extent that it requires effort to transform its nature.

There are many passages in the Upanisads which emphasize the difficulty of attaining Brahman. "He of whom one many are not even able to hear, whom many, even when they hear of Him, do not